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A Collaborative Intervention: Measuring the Impact of a Flipped Classroom Approach on Library One-shots for the Composition Classroom

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Abstract: Instruction librarians teaching one-shot information literacy (IL) sessions to freshman composition classes at academic universities across the U.S. United States experience a familiar set of issues. In response, librarians have produced a large of literature detailing flipped instruction approaches, collaborative case studies with outside departments, and critiques of the library one-shot. However, little research exists describing attempts to combine these three approaches in one study. Both a case study and an impact on assessment study, this article describes a collaborative intervention between the Library Instruction team,

the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program, and the English department, with the purpose of studying the intervention's impact on student learning.

Introduction

Members of the Library Instruction team at the College of Staten Island observed issues in teaching information literacy in one-shot sessions to freshman composition students. Most concerns will be familiar to any instruction librarian at an academic university. The most pressing issues observed included: students entering the classroom unprepared for the session (confusion around their composition assignment, no working research question), lack of coordination between the composition faculty and the library instruction faculty, poorly timed library one-shots with regard to assignments due, and a lack of student focus during the "hands on" research time.

Flipped Classroom Approach

The library and information science (LIS) literature recounts a history of information literacy instruction, covering the movement toward active learning inspired by developments in pedagogical theory.¹⁰ Educators have been trying to steer instruction away from both behaviorism and the banking model critiqued so well by Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.¹¹ Informed by new theoretical developments in education such as social constructivism, they are incorporating active learning methods, in which students are more equal participants in the classroom rather than passive vessels into which teacher-experts transfer information. It has taken a little longer for these developments to permeate in higher education, where the lecture model has held sway for so long. These changes, including the flipped or inverted classroom, have been embraced by many librarian-teachers.

Collaboration

Research on librarian-faculty collaborations abounds in the LIS literature. Such collaborations are also discussed in the composition and rhetoric literature. It is useful to view our work from this perspective, though it is acknowledged that the library literature has more scholarship on this subject.¹⁹ Rising recognition of the importance of information literacy to learning outcomes in higher education provides an opportunity for librarians.²⁰ A stronger role for librarians opens with the integration of information literacy into general education curriculum and course learning outcomes. A successful flipped classroom is dependent on relationships, and discipline faculty buy-in and enforcement. We experienced the benefits of collaboration described in the LIS literature as well as its challenges.

Our high-level collaboration was between two departments, implemented across a core course with over a hundred sections.

Developing a collaborative project at this scale can clearly be beneficial in encouraging faculty follow-through, as opposed to developing individual collaborative relationships. Writing Program administrators' administrative status encourages program-wide collaboration with libraries. 26 Despite the abundant benefits of wide-scale collaboration, a sticky challenge presents itself if individual faculty choose not to comply. Indeed, we experienced this challenge in our project when some department faculty, as well as library faculty, did not complete the planned intervention as intended.

What resources should you use?

The librarian will discuss the different resources available to you, and how they can help with your research. It is important to think about which resources will provide reliable information and will help to answer your research question. For more details on selecting resources, use the guide "Comparing and Evaluating Information Sources", which can be found on the Writing for Research website.

Reference materials: a good place for starting your research

Library reference materials: Encyclopedias, almanacs, dictionaries, text books, and other materials that provide basic information on various topics. Information is considered reliable.

Wikipedia: A popular online community-edited encyclopedia. Though it usually provides reliable information, it should not be cited in a research paper because of the possibility of mistakes and misinformation

Library books: A wide range of books are available for checkout at your library. Whether a particular book is a good resource for your paper depends the content, intention, and reliability of the book.

Periodicals: a type of publication that comes out periodically

Scholarly journal articles: Articles written by professional scholars and published in academic journals. There are many different journal articles on a wide range of topics available through your library.

Newspapers and magazines: These vary in what they cover and how trustworthy it is, but can be useful depending on the quality of the publication and your research topic. However, you will probably need to use academic resources in your research as well.

Blogs and websites: Blogs and websites are very diverse. Before you use information posted on the internet, consider who wrote the information, the purpose of the blog or website, and whether they provide evidence or citations to support any claims. Writing a research paper is a process, and you will almost certainly be accessing library resources multiple times in the course of writing. Your paper will change as you develop it, and so will the information you need. It may be useful to keep an outline on hand to help keep you on track as your paper develops. The guide “Using Outlines to Guide Research” can help with this, and is available on the Writing for Research website.

You may discover that a certain resource you found is not as useful as you hoped, that you need additional or different information, or you may learn about a useful resource you did not know about before. With the skills you learned today, you should be able to find many useful resources on your own, but you may also want to get the help of a reference librarian. You can make an appointment to speak with a librarian about your research and they can direct you to some useful resources you may not have found on your own.

Conclusion

Building upon our long-standing relationship with the English department, the Library embarked on a collaboration that introduced a flipped method to teaching one-shot library instruction classes. A year after first implementing the intervention assignment, we believe we have improved the manner in which we introduce information literacy skills and concepts to freshman students writing their first research papers in composition classes. Our case study details suggestions for collaborative outreach with the department that houses the targeted course (in our case collaboration with the English department to improve the Library’s teaching methods for the freshman composition course ENG 151), and outlines a successful model to introduce research methods for first year students and to create a more effective library instruction session. The data from our assessment of the project supports existing literature on the effectiveness of the flipped classroom technique and on building collaborations between libraries and other academic departments. Like any partnership in its nascent stage, we experienced growing pains, including one of our primary collaborators, a WAC Fellow, completing his term, which created a greater impetus for the Library to administer the project’s website. Overall, the collaboration succeeded because of teamwork, adaptability, and flexibility, all while meeting the desired learning objectives.

The List of Used Literature

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